

Poetry of Langston Hughes

Literary Devices

Study the following terms and examples.

Simile: a comparison between two unlike items using the terms “like” or “as”

Example: the cat pounced like a warrior

Metaphor: a comparison between unlike items that does not use the terms “like” or “as”

Example: My cat is my alarm clock.

Onomatopoeia: a word that imitates a sound

Example: Hiss!

Alliteration: the repetition of beginning consonant sounds in neighboring words

Example: The cat crawled on the couch.

Match the terms with their definitions.

Simile	A word that imitates a sound
Metaphor	A comparison between unlike items without the use of “like” or “as”
Onomatopoeia	The repetition of beginning consonant sounds in neighboring words
Alliteration	A comparison between unlike items using the terms “like” or “as”

Write your own examples of these literary devices.

Simile
Metaphor
Onomatopoeia
Alliteration

Read the following excerpts from Langston Hughes' poems and indicate the kind of literary device on the line.

- 1) "My soul has grown deep like the rivers."¹ _____
- 2) "And dawn-today
Broad arch above the road we came."² _____
- 3) "He made that poor piano moan with melody."³ _____
- 4) "or records—Bessie, bop, or Bach."⁴ _____
- 5) "Does it dry up
Like a raisin in the sun?"⁵ _____
- 6) "Life for me ain't been no crystal stair."⁶ _____
- 7) "Thump, thump, thump, went his foot on the floor."⁷ _____
- 8) "And black slaves
Singing sorrow songs on the banks of a mighty river"⁸ _____
- 9) "Her face is like an ancient cameo
Turned brown by the ages."⁹ _____

Answers

Simile	A word that imitates a sound Onomatopoeia
Metaphor	A comparison between unlike items without the use of “like” or “as” Metaphor
Onomatopoeia	The repetition of beginning consonant sounds in neighboring words Alliteration
Alliteration	A comparison between unlike items using the terms “like” or “as” Simile

- 1) “My soul has grown deep like the rivers.”¹ **Simile**
- 2) “And dawn-today
Broad arch above the road we came.”² **Metaphor**
- 3) “He made that poor piano moan with melody.”³ **Alliteration**
- 4) “or records—Bessie, bop, or Bach.”⁴ **Alliteration**
- 5) “Does it dry up
Like a raisin in the sun?”⁵ **Simile**
- 6) “Life for me ain’t been no crystal stair.”⁶ **Metaphor**
- 7) “Thump, thump, thump, went his foot on the floor.”⁷ **Onomatopoeia**
- 8) “And black slaves
Singing sorrow songs on the banks of a mighty river”⁸ **Alliteration**
- 9) “Her face is like an ancient cameo
Turned brown by the ages.”⁹ **Simile**

Works Cited

1. Hughes, Langston. "The Negro Speaks of Rivers." *Poetry for Young People: Langston Hughes*, edited by David Roessel and Arnold Rampersad, Scholastic Books, 2006, p. 8.
2. Hughes. "Youth." *Poetry*. 17.
3. Hughes. "The Weary Blues." *Poetry*. 24.
4. Hughes. "Theme for English B." *Poetry*. 43.
5. Hughes. "Harlem." *Poetry*. 44.
6. Hughes. "Mother to Son." *Poetry*. 14.
7. Hughes. "The Weary Blues." *Poetry*. 14.
8. Hughes. "Aunt Sue's Stories." *Poetry*. 10.
9. Hughes. "When Sue Wears Red." *Poetry*. 15.